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Period 3

Robert Miller
US Air Force
23 Years in Service
2018

Robert Miller

Robert Miller served in the US Air Force for 23 years, during his time in the service, the most important lesson he learned was how to be independent. Miller faced many rigorous challenges and many new obstacles he had to tackle on the way. Throughout his whole journey, independence played a huge role because he realized that he wouldn't always have the relationships he once had and he couldn't always rely on others.

Miller was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1935. He attended an all black school up to college because high school, middle school, and elementary were all mashed into one school when he was growing up. He then attended Hampton Institute to study the medical field. Soon Miller came to the realization that medical school wasn't for him so he enlisted in the Air Force in 1954 at around the age of 19.

After he enlisted he began his basic training for eight weeks at Lackland Air Force Base. Boot camp was rough for him from the second he got off the bus, they shaved his head to start off the rigorous treatment he was about to receive. Miller and those with him had frequent inspections and everything had to be absolutely spotless or else they would have to start over completely from scratch. Although everything there was extremely strict he made close friends and learned to work together and how to do things for himself such as laundry, because his mom could no longer do it for him. Miller and his friends also made ways to have fun such as pulling pranks such as one they called "short sheet" which is a way they would tie the sheets so when

someone tried to lay in the bed they couldn't until they completely remade it. After his eight weeks of boot camp ended he finally moved onto the Air Force for technical training.

Miller wanted to be a pilot for the Air Force but didn't qualify because his peripheral vision wasn't great. So he began his training as a radar technician on airplanes. He faced combat support in Thailand and his job was to support B52 Aircrews, which are bomber planes. After the war, veterans were treated badly, they could not even wear their uniforms or they would run the risk of getting harrassed. Though Miller did not personally experience any segregation, there was a lot of off base discrimination taking place. There were certain areas of southern towns where African Americans could not enter or they would be arrested. But in training, everyone was treated the same, they all had to follow the same rules despite race or gender. During his many years in the service he would communicate with his family through letters, cassette tape recorders, and short wave radios. In 1977 Miller decided it was time for him to retire from the Air Force.

Miller was thrown a ceremony for retiring, to be paid respect from his friends and comrades in the Air Force. During this ceremony he was given two medals, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Force Commendation Medal. After retiring the skills he had enabled him to qualify for a good job. One of his connections he made during his time in the Air Force decided to help him out and introduced him to an industry that was looking for radar technicians. Although he enjoyed the Air Force he didn't miss it, he was happy with that chapter in his life but it was time for him to move on. Miller has a beautiful family with 2 daughters, who chose their path in college, and a son who followed his footsteps and joined the Air Force. He traveled around the globe to different countries after retiring because he enjoyed experiencing new environments.

Despite not engaging in actual combat, Robert Miller played a very important role in the US Air Force. He does not regret joining the Air Force and his time there has taught him many valuable lessons that he will carry on throughout his whole life.